

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02876 01 OF 02 161331Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 AID-05 IGA-02 TRSE-00
OMB-01 EB-07 L-03 H-01 MC-02 NEAE-00 SSO-00
NSCE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 /088 W
-----161414Z 092095 /45

O 161235Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4313
SECDEF WASHDC//ISA IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 2876

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MILI LE US PINS
SUBJ: MILITARY AID TO LEBANON

1. WE ARE SUBMITTING IN SEPARATE DAO MESSAGE DETAILS OF LEBANESE PLANS FOR EQUIPPING A 3300-MAN MECHANIZED INFANTRY BRIGADE. THIS IS TO BE THE FIRST MAJOR STEP IN THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY. EQUIPMENT DESIRED IS STRAIGHTFORWARD, UNSOPHISTICATED AND RELATIVELY SIMPLE, CONSISTENT WITH INTERNAL SECURITY ROLE BRIGADE WILL PLAY. LEBANESE OF COURSE WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE EQUIPMENT FROM US IMMEDIATELY UNDER GRANT. THEY ARE RECONCILED TO FACT MOST OF IT WILL PROBABLY BE FMS, BUT THEY DO HOPE TO HAVE BRIGADE EQUIPPED BY NOVEMBER. THIS IS GOING TO TAKE FAST ACTION IF WE ARE TO MEET THEIR REQUIREMENTS.

2. DURING MY RECENT CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON AND SUBSEQUENTLY, SEVERAL QUESTIONS WERE RAISED ABOUT PROPOSED MILITARY AID PROGRAM: "WHY SHOULD CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02876 01 OF 02 161331Z

USG AID LEBANESE ARMY? WHAT ASSURANCE DO WE HAVE THAT THE WEAPONS WILL NOT BE STOLEN BY THE VARIOUS FACTIONS AS THEY WERE DURING THE CIVIL WAR? ARE WE NOT ENTERING AN OPEN-ENDED ARRANGEMENT WHICH WILL ENTAIL CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPLYING ARMS TO LEBANON? WHAT IS THE EFFECT ON ISRAEL'S SECURITY?" THE FOLLOWING IS AN ATTEMPT

TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS AND GIVE RATIONALE FOR SUPPORT REQUESTED.

3. IN FIRST PLACE, OUR PRIMARY INTEREST IN LEBANON IS PEACE AND STABILITY. THERE WILL BE NEITHER UNTIL THE LEBANESE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS UNDER ITS CONTROL A UNIFIED, INTEGRATED ARMY CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING INTERNAL SECURITY. PUTTING TOGETHER SUCH A FORCE IS A DELICATE, COMPLEX AND VERY DIFFICULT TASK IN THE CURRENT LEBANESE CLIMATE. THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON, AND THE NEW ARMY COMMANDER IN PARTICULAR, HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THIS PROBLEM FOR MONTHS AND SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE--AN INTEGRATED (I.E. MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN) GENERAL STAFF HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED, THE FIRST PILOT INTEGRATED UNIT IS NOW IN TRAINING, PLANS ARE PROCEEDING FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A NUMBER OF INFANTRY AND SERVICE BATTALIONS, OFFICERS TO LEAD THEM ARE BEING NAMED, AND SERVICE UNITS ARE BEING REORGANIZED, BROUGHT UP TO STRENGTH AND PUT BACK INTO OPERATION. THERE IS LITTLE PROGRESS VISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC, BUT A PATIENT AND LOGICAL PLAN IS BEING FOLLOWED AND WILL PRODUCE RESULTS EVENTUALLY.

4. AMONG THE MORE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS THE GOVERNMENT FACES IS THE ACQUISITION OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE NEW (AND SOME OLD) UNITS. THE LEBANESE ARMY HAS ALWAYS BEEN SMALL (17,000 MEN IN 1975) AND ITS REQUIREMENTS ARE NOT LARGE BY PRESENT-DAY STANDARDS. TOTAL COST
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02876 01 OF 02 161331Z

IS CONSIDERABLE, HOWEVER, BECAUSE LEBANESE ARE STARTING FROM SCRATCH IN MANY RESPECTS, AND NEW ARMY MUST BE EQUIPPED FROM GROUND UP, I.E., FROM SHOES AND SOCKS TO WEAPONS AND VEHICLES. THE LEBANESE ARE NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO THIS UNAIDED, THEY NEED HELP.

5. WHILE THERE ARE THEORETICAL ALTERNATE SOURCES OF HELP, THOSE SOURCES HAVE NOT BEEN VERY FORTHCOMING. THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW DONATIONS OF NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT (BEDS, TRUCKS, UNIFORMS) FROM SAUDI ARABIA, FRANCE AND JORDAN, BUT THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN THE ONLY FOREIGN POWER TO COME FORWARD TO DATE WITH AN EFFORT TO ORGANIZE A SYSTEMATIC MILITARY AID PROGRAM. WE HAVE DONE SO BECAUSE WE HAVE A STAKE IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF LEBANON INTO A HEALTHY AND VIABLE STATE, AND THE CREATION OF AN ARMY IS AN ESSENTIAL STEP IN THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS. ALTERNATIVE IS CONTINUED

DEPENDENCE ON SYRIANS.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02876 02 OF 02 161349Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 AID-05 IGA-02 TRSE-00

OMB-01 EB-07 L-03 H-01 MC-02 NEAE-00 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 /088 W

-----161415Z 092345 /45

O 161235Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4314

SECDEF WASHDC//ISA IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 2876

6. CURRENT HOLDINGS OF THE ARMY ARE SEVERELY LIMITED. DURING CIVIL WAR OPPOSING SIDES SEIZED, STOLE OR PURCHASED MANY OF ITS WEAPONS AND MUCH OF ITS EQUIPMENT. THAT THIS HAPPENED WAS DUE IN FINAL ANALYSIS TO IRRESOLUTE BEHAVIOR OF THE COUNTRY'S CIVILIAN LEADERS WHO, FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, DID NOT COMMIT THE ARMY WHEN THEY SHOULD HAVE AND DID NOT GIVE IT ROLE IT COULD HAVE ASSUMED IN MAINTAINING ORDER. DISINTEGRATION OF THE ARMY WAS A TRAGIC REFLECTION OF THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL DISINTEGRATION, WHICH IT COULD HAVE PREVENTED IF PROPERLY USED.

7. THERE IS, OF COURSE, NO GUARANTEE SAME THING WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN, GIVEN FALLIBILITY OF HUMAN NATURE. (NOR, FOR THAT MATTER, CAN THERE BE AN IRONCLAD GUARANTEE AS TO THE ULTIMATE FATE OF ARMS WE ARE GIVING OR SELLING TO OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD.) BEST WE CAN SAY IS THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND COMMANDING OFFICERS OF THE ARMY ARE RESOLVED THAT IT SHALL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN AND ARE DOING THEIR BEST TO THAT END. THIS IS WHY THEY ARE UNDERTAKING SUCH A PAINSTAKING RECONSTRUCTION

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02876 02 OF 02 161349Z

OF THE ARMY INSTEAD OF JUST SLAPPING SOME UNITS TOGETHER. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS THAT HAVE ALWAYS DETERMINED MILITARY STRUCTURE AND BEHAVIOR IN PAST ARE BEING QUESTIONED AND A NEW PAGE IS BEING TURNED. WE THINK IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THE LEBANESE IN THIS ENDEAVOR.

8. WE HAD A MODEST (\$8 MILLION) GRANT MILITARY EQUIPMENT PROGRAM IN LEBANON IN LATE FIFTIES AND WE HAVE SOLD LEBANON ABOUT \$25 MILLION WORTH OF EQUIPMENT THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS OVER INTERVENING YEARS. WE HAVE ALSO HAD A CONTINUING GRANT TRAINING PROGRAM (\$150,000 TO \$200,000 PER YEAR) WHICH HAS BEEN USED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO SEND LEBANESE TO SERVICE SCHOOLS IN UNITED STATES, WHERE THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED VERY GOOD RECORDS. LEBANESE WOULD, OF COURSE, HAVE LIKED MORE GRANT AID, BUT THEY HAVE ALSO WANTED TO SHOP AND CHOOSE AND HAVE WISHED TO AVOID RELIANCE ON ANY ONE SOURCE. WHILE WE WOULD EXPECT THAT RE-EQUIPMENT OF ENTIRE UNITS WITH AMERICAN WEAPONS AND VEHICLES WOULD CREATE A CERTAIN CONTINUING DEMAND FOR REPLACEMENT AND SPARE PARTS, WE WOULD EXPECT THEM TO BE PURCHASED FOR CASH ONCE LEBANON IS BACK ON ITS FEET. WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THE PROGRAM TO CONTINUE BEYOND FY 1979.

9. IT HAS ALSO BEEN ASKED WHAT EFFECT SUCH AID WOULD HAVE ON ISRAELI SECURITY. IN FIRST PLACE, LEBANON IS NOT A CONFRONTATION STATE AND HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT HAS NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AGAINST ISRAEL. IT REGARDS ITS FRONTIER WITH THAT COUNTRY AS INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AND FIXED. THE LEBANESE HAVE HISTORICALLY AVOIDED MILITARY INVOLVEMENT AGAINST ISRAEL AND HAVE NEVER EVINCED AN INTEREST IN CREATING MILITARY FORCES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02876 02 OF 02 161349Z

CAPABLE OF INVOLVEMENT. ROLE OF LEBANESE ARMY HAS ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF INTERNAL SECURITY AND IT WILL CONTINUE TO BE SO. IN SECOND PLACE, LEBANESE CIVIL WAR AND CURRENT TROUBLES IN SOUTH LEBANON, WHICH ALSO AFFECT ISRAEL'S SECURITY, ARE IN LARGE PART DUE TO WEAKNESS OF LEBANESE ARMY. CREATION OF AN EFFICIENT MILITARY FORCE IS FIRST STEP TO CREATING CALM ALONG THE BORDER. WE BELIEVE ISRAELIS ALSO RECOGNIZE THIS. INDEED, THEY HAVE SAID THAT ONLY ACCEPTABLE FORCE IN SOUTH LEBANON

IS THE LEBANESE ARMY. THAT ARMY MUST, OF COURSE,
BE EQUIPPED IF IT IS TO FUNCTION.
PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BEIRUT02876
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770215-0338
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770652/aaaabtcy.tel
Line Count: 227
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b211077c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2135048
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MILITARY AID TO LEBANON
TAGS: PFOR, MILI, PINS, MASS, LE, US
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b211077c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009